

Recycling Myths: Learn the Truth (Part 1)

There are a lot of myths about recycling. With some help from the City of Denver web site a few of these mistaken beliefs will be discussed so you can be an informed recycler and citizen.

[Myth: If a plastic container has a recycling symbol on it, then it is recyclable.](#)

FALSE. The recycling symbol on containers represents the general category of plastic that material is made from, but not if the container is recyclable. A recycling symbol on a container does not guarantee that container is recyclable **locally**. Plastics vary greatly by their resin types and how they are manufactured. There are also two common manufacturing processes: plastic bottles are “blow molded,” whereas, most plastic tubs are “injection molded.” As a result of the different resin types, the different manufacturing processes, and the different mixes of chemical additives (dyes, plasticizers, UV inhibitors, softeners, adhesives and more) plastics melt at different temperatures, have different physical properties and as such need to be recycled differently. **Presently, the local market only accepts #1 and #2 Plastic Bottles with a neck.**

[Myth: Buying recycled products doesn't really make a difference.](#)

FALSE. Increasing the use of products made from post-consumer recycled material is critical to expanding market demand for the materials we recycle, and in turn that encourages more manufactures to use recycled materials in their products. **Manufacturing products from recycled materials results in significant savings in energy, water and other natural resources, and creates less pollution.** When buying recycled products, be sure to read the labels or specifications. A recycling symbol does not mean it is made from recycled materials. Be sure to look for language stating it is made from recycled materials and the higher the post-consumer content, the better. Every recycled product you buy, whether it is napkins made from recycled paper or roof shingles made for recycled tires, **reduces stress on our environment.**

[Myth: It takes more energy to collect recyclables than the energy saved by recycling.](#)

FALSE. The energy required to convert raw materials such as minerals, oil and trees into metals, plastics and paper is far greater than the amount of energy required to collect and recycle our paper, bottles and cans into new products. **The myth that the energy needed to collect and process recyclables outweighs the environmental benefits of recycling, is completely false.**

In fact, a recent study found that the total energy used to collect, haul and process a ton of recyclables is less than 1 million Btu's and that it takes approximately 10.4 million Btu's to manufacture products from a ton of recyclables. In comparison it takes 23.3 million Btu's to manufacture those same products from virgin materials. That's a savings of 11.9 million Btu's per ton of material recycled.

The energy savings from recycling can be seen among individual material types as well. For instance, making aluminum cans from recycled cans takes 95 percent less energy than making

cans from raw aluminum bauxite ore . The mining and melting process to exact pure aluminum from bauxite ore is extremely energy intensive. Additionally, one ton of recycled aluminum saves an estimated 14,000 kilowatt hours of energy and 40 barrels of oil .

City of Denver <http://tinyurl.com/RecyclingMythsCO>

RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE RECYCLING MEETING UPDATE

Public comment is being solicited as the City of Gallup continues to explore the possibility of initiating a Residential Curbside Recycling Program. The first public meeting this year was held on January 21. The next public meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18 at Tobe Turpen Elementary School (Mentmore) from 6-7 pm. The citizenry is encouraged to attend to find out more about the curbside recycling initiative and what it means for Gallup. Two more public meetings will be scheduled. For those dates call the Mayor's Office (863-1223).

For more general information about recycling in Gallup-McKinley County go to the McKinley Citizens' Recycling Council web site www.recyclegallup.org or call a MCRC volunteer at (505) 722-5142 or (505) 722-9257.